Coast Guard Flag Voice 24

YEAR 2000 AND YOUR PAY

WILL I GET PAID AFTER 1 JAN 2000 ???

Recently, public attention has focused on the impact the Year 2000 date change could have on businesses, utilities, government agencies, and other organizations that rely on computerized systems to help run their operations.

Why so much attention? The Year 2000 date change can affect any system that uses computer software programs or computer chips, including automated equipment and machinery. For example, many software programs and computer chips store calendar dates as two-digit rather than four-digit numbers. These software programs record the year 1998 as "98". This approach will work until the Year 2000, when these programs may read "00" as 1900 instead of 2000. The result may be erroneous calculations from the software or embedded chips; the program, unable to recognize the calculated value, may create unintended consequences, such as disabling the system. For instance, the program might be designed to opt for a "fail safe" mode and stop working. Businesses, utilities, government agencies, and other organizations are currently busy fixing (scrambling in many cases) and testing their systems to make sure they will operate properly when the calendar changes.

Since all our pay systems run on computers, I am sure you might wonder if you will get paid after 1 January 2000. Specifically, what actions are we taking to make sure pay delivery continues uninterrupted at the turn of the Century?

The Department of Transportation (DOT) processes civilian payroll. DOT is progressing on track and expects to implement its Y2K-compliant system by the Office of Management and Budget deadline of March 31, 1999.

The Coast Guard Human Resources Service & Information Center (HRSIC) oversees the automated systems that provide personnel and payroll checks for the Active Duty, Reserve, Retired, and Annuitant communities. These systems already have been modified to be Y2K-compliant, undergone extensive parallel testing, and currently are producing monthly payrolls. While our personnel and payroll systems have dealt with some post-2000 dates for quite a few years, HRSIC's staff continues to test the system extensively with future-dated data on a computer certified Y2K-compliant. This final testing phase will be completed by the end of January 1999. In addition to efforts on Coast Guard internal systems, HRSIC has coordinated with all its external customers to ensure data exchanges are not affected by the century change.

Of the many external data suppliers and receivers, the most critical from a payroll delivery standpoint are the U.S. Treasury Department and Federal Reserve System, both of which have very active Y2K compliance programs. In fact, as a condition of membership, Federal Reserve Bank Examiners are inspecting member financial institutions, such as banks, to ensure their systems are Y2K-compliant.

The Coast Guard is very confident of its and DOT's ability to produce a Year 2000 payroll and of Treasury's and the Federal Reserve System's ability to deliver the payroll data. Even so, we continue to evaluate and develop contingency alternatives if the financial system infrastructure experiences problems due to the century change. More to come on these.

Regards, FL Ames

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